

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

The Education Act, 1996 requires all academies to have a policy on charging and remissions for academy activities, which will be kept under regular review.

The West Grantham Academies Trust believes that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from academy activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parents' financial means consistent with each academy's budgetary position.

This Charging and Remissions Policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the opportunities.

1. Academy Trips

- a) Essential to fulfilment of curriculum requirements

No charge will be levied in respect of day trips that are an *essential* part of the curriculum.

- b) Day Trips - Enrichment purposes

For trips which are not essential to the National Curriculum, statutory subjects or in preparation for prescribed examinations, a charge may be levied up to the full cost of the trip.

- c) Residential trips – Essential to fulfilment of curriculum requirements

For residential trips which are essential to the National Curriculum, statutory subjects or in preparation for prescribed examinations, a charge will be levied for board and lodging.

- d) Residential trips – Enrichment purposes

For residential trips which are not essential to the National Curriculum, statutory subjects or in preparation for prescribed examinations, a charge will be levied up to the full cost of the trip.

The Board of Directors recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate costs) as soon as possible so that parents/carers can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay in instalments beyond the date of the trip
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a “first pay, first served” basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

2. Examination Entries

- a) A charge will be levied in respect of examination entries for students where the academy has *not* prepared the student for the examination.
- b) A charge will be levied in respect of examination entries for students where:
 - the academy has prepared the student for the examination and
 - it considers that for educational reasons the student should not be entered and
 - the student's parent/carer wishes the student to be entered.

In these circumstances, if the student subsequently passes the examination, the academy may refund the cost.

- c) A charge may be levied for students re-sitting an examination where it is believed by the academy, in its absolute discretion, that the student has failed or under-performed in the preceding exam for reasons other than educational teaching.
- d) A charge will be levied where a student fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the academy paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.
- e) The charge levied in a) to d) above will be the cost of the examination entry, plus any applicable centre fee.
- f) Where a department/the academy deem it appropriate to use other services provided by exam boards the department/academy will bear these costs. Individual parents who wish to use the services to access information on their son/daughter's individual performance in an exam or module may request the service from the exams office at the academy. In such cases the exam board's charge will usually be levied.

3. Materials and Textbooks

- Where a student or parent wishes to retain items produced as a result of art, craft and design, or design and technology, a discretionary charge may be levied for the cost of the materials used. Textbooks are provided free of charge for use within the academy, but in some subjects additional revision guides are available, for which a charge may be made.

4. School Uniform

Branded school uniform items (blazer, tie, polo shirt, primary jumpers) should be purchased by parents directly from academy suppliers; these are listed on the website.

School uniform will *not* be provided free of charge to pupils. However, where parents are experiencing financial difficulties, and meet any of the criteria in paragraph 9 below, then financial assistance may be granted, upon request, on an individual case basis by the Headteacher.

5. Music Tuition

- a) Music tuition, whether group or individual, will be free, whether it is provided during or outside academy hours, if it forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or required by the national curriculum.
- b) No charges will be made for group activities e.g. academy orchestra, which take place during academy hours.
- c) A charge will be made for individual and small group music tuition not forming part of a syllabus of a prescribed public examination or required by the national curriculum, provided parental agreement is obtained before a student is given the tuition. The charge *may* include:
 - The cost of the teacher
 - The costs of sheet music
 - The hire and insurance of a musical instrument
- d) Serious consideration will be given to requests for tuition from parents suffering from financial hardship, with each case being judged independently at the academy's own discretion.
- e) Lessons must be paid for in advance, for a block of sessions.
- f) The academy will make a refund for a lesson missed only in the following circumstances:
 - The student is taking an external examination
 - The student is on a academy trip
 - The student is on work experience
 - When an academy test takes place during the period when a music lesson has been timetabled to take place. However it is the responsibility of the student to inform the Music Teacher the day before to enable revisions to the timetable to take place. If no adjustment can be made then a refund would be made.
- g) If the teacher is absent and unable to take the lesson the cost of the next sessions will be reduced accordingly.
- h) The academy reserves the right to terminate tuition if it does not consider groups to be viable or if progress/commitment is unsatisfactory. This will always be done after consultation with the instrumental teacher the student and parents.
- i) Academy insurance will cover loaned instruments in the academy and on the journey to and from academy. Parents' own insurance must cover the cost of replacement/repair should damage occur outside these times. Insurance should be taken out by parents for students own instruments.

6. Educational Activities taking place during and outside Academy hours

- a) No charges will be made for any activity or materials which are essential to fulfil the statutory curriculum. Swimming contributions requested are to cover hire of pool and use of the facilities, not for tuition.
- b) Voluntary contributions may be asked for to enable extra activities, which are deemed educationally desirable, to take place. It may also be stated that such an activity will not be able to take place unless enough contributions are received to finance the activity. The contributions requested will reflect the cost of that activity (including any consequential costs such as supply cover, transport, refreshments), less any subsidy from funds available to the academy.

7. Damage/Loss to Property

- a) A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of academy property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.
- b) A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the academy. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.
- c) Where payment is not received the Trust will take matters to the small claims court.

8. Voluntary Contributions

The Education Act, 1996, confirms the right of schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or in support of any activity organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours.

Where the academy cannot levy charges, and it is not possible to make these additional activities within the resources ordinarily available to the academy, the academy may request or invite parents to make a contribution towards the cost of the trip. Students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request or invitation. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, then it will be cancelled. Every care must be taken to prevent public identification of those children whose parents' donations have not been forthcoming. Students whose parents or carers do not make voluntary donations will not be singularly excluded from any proposed trip, visit or activity.

The administration teams will be responsible for recording payments of donations and submitting these to the Trust finance team for banking. The finance team will calculate the cost of the event and will advise the trip leader. The finance team are responsible for collecting, recording and banking payments from students.

9. Remissions Policy

- a) If the parent/carer of a student meets any of the following criteria:
 - Income Support (IS)
 - Employment and Support Allowance (Income Based)
 - Child Tax Credit, provided the annual taxable income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue is not in excess of £16,190.
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Children who receive Income Support (IS) or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance in their own right are also entitled to receive free school meals

Then charges will be remitted, upon request, on an individual case basis by the Headteacher.

- b) The Headteacher, Finance and Strategy Committee or Board of Directors may remit in full or part charges in respect of a student, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.

- c) The Headteacher, Finance and Strategy Committee or Board of Directors may decide not to levy charges in respect of a particular activity, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.

10. Lettings

The academies will make their facilities available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities. The scale of charges will be determined by the Senior Leadership Team with annual review by the Finance and Strategy Committee. The Finance and Strategy Committee delegate to the Senior Leadership Team the ability to set charges according to the market, but under the obligation to give due consideration to the objects of the academies to be a resource used by the community. Outright profit maximisation should not be the objective used for price setting.

11. Commercial activities

The academies have an estate that they can use to support community growth and involvement. These resources can, and should, be used to generate funds for the future development of the academies and to support the education provision to our students.

The Finance and Strategy Committee delegate to the Senior Leadership Team the authority to set commercial charge rates for use of the academies various resources, subject to charges at least covering the cost of provision, and that due consideration be given to the responsibility of the academy to be a key component of community life.